



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

The Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals Deploys RI HOPE Outreach Workers to Rhode Island Communities Most Affected by Hurricane Sandy

Workers are Assisting Survivors in Washington County Who Continue to Face Emotional and Other Challenges Related to the Storm

Cranston, RI, – RI HOPE (Helping Other People in Emergencies), a time-limited, community-based program originally established to help Rhode Island residents affected by the historic flood in 2010, has been re-activated to assist Hurricane Sandy victims with their recovery. The program, which runs through January 13, 2013, is a federal response to the presidential disaster declaration for the most severely-impacted areas of Rhode Island.

Program outreach workers currently are visiting affected neighborhoods and businesses, in Washington County. Through face-to-face outreach in neighborhoods and at community events, RI HOPE staff provide emotional support, education and guidance to those impacted by the hurricane.

“Our mission is to assist individuals, through community-based outreach, by helping them understand their reactions, listening to their concerns and linking them to appropriate resources and services,” says Craig Stenning, Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). “Like other disasters, hurricanes can result in emotional distress in addition to property damage, financial and other losses.”

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“Some people we are meeting with are talking about being challenged by multiple disaster-related concerns.” says Susan Earley, Director of RI HOPE. “Many people can function very well in a crisis, but may eventually experience some symptoms due to exhaustion and the effects of ongoing stress.”

The program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and implemented by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH).

RI HOPE provides emotional support, educational presentations, disaster response materials, behavioral health interventions (as needed) and links residents to federal, State and local resources and services. All RI HOPE services are free. For more information, call the RI HOPE information and referral line, toll-free, Monday through Friday, at 401-484-4890. For general support, information and referrals 24 hours a day, dial 2-1-1.

About RI HOPE

RI HOPE is designed to empower those affected by Hurricane Sandy by educating them about normal reactions to a disaster, teaching them coping skills, assessing them for individual needs, and linking them to appropriate federal, state and local resources. For more information about RI HOPE, call 401-484-4890.

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